



Virtual National Student Leadership Congress June 2020

Interviews with METS Student Leaders

The 31st Annual National Student Leadership Congress (NSLC) took place virtually June 15-19, 2020. Two of our very own METS Student Leaders attended: Jazmin Druffel, a rising junior from St. Ignatius, and Madison Nowakowski, a rising senior from Great Falls.



Madison Nowakowski

1. What part of NSLC was most memorable for you?

My favorite part was when we got to speak to the Senators and Representatives. I spoke to Senator Daines' assistant William Parsons. He was very interested in learning more about TRIO and my personal interests and we even talked about the possibility of an internship for me in Washington DC. I also made friends with an amazing girl from Guam, Marina. We still stay in touch and I'm glad to have met her.

2. What did you learn from participating in the Mock Congress?

I learned more about the process of creating and passing bills. It's not easy to write a bill. You have to outline everything in advance and really know what you're talking about. Presenting the bill was also



Jazmin Druffel

1. What part of NSLC was most memorable for you?

One of the speakers was really memorable for me because his session was regarding identity. The way he talked about identity helped me realize things about my own identity that I wasn't aware of. I realized that I value my family above everything else.

2. What did you learn from participating in the Mock Congress?

I learned that incorporating different perspectives is difficult. People from different parts of the country have different ideas about what should happen. It takes teamwork to get things done; without teamwork, you can't accomplish anything.

intimidating – having to talk about the issue in front of so many different people.

3. How did participating in this opportunity shape your definition of a leader?

I learned that there are lots of different leadership styles. You can be laidback or talkative, but in the end we all contribute to the project.

4. Has participating in this experience changed your view of leadership? Please explain.

This is a tough question; it definitely has changed my view of leadership. You don't have to be the loudest and most assertive person to be a leader. The best way to be a leader is to have what's needed – information, ideas, etc.

5. How has this experience supported your plans for high school and beyond?

Speaking with the senators and representatives gave us the opportunity to advocate for the expansion of TRIO. There is the possibility that some of the congressional leaders may come visit our high schools. Before this experience, I thought maybe I would focus on political science as a minor. But now I'm looking at the possibility of taking a gap year in order to participate in this internship and then continuing on to college where I may pursue political science as my major instead.

3. How did participating in this opportunity shape your definition of a leader?

My definition of a leader is someone who takes the lead when it's needed. A leader doesn't always have to be the one in command. There is a difference between leading and commanding. Commanding is definite; it's something that must be done no matter. Leading is offering up a solution and allowing others to join in or not.

4. Has participating in this experience changed your view of leadership? Please explain.

Not so much. I've had ideas of what leadership was like before this experience and NSLC just showed me that my thoughts and ideas were relevant.

5. How has this experience supported your plans for high school and beyond?

It gave me something to put on my resume that will help me when I go to college. It will show my professors and those I work with that I am willing to learn new things and that I have the drive to do so. I think this shows that I am willing to better myself